DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 894 PS 015 671

AUTHOR Roberson, Glenda F.; Muoki, Isaac Mulatya
TITLE A Look at Kenya's Children.
PUB DATE Nov 85
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (New Orleans, LA, November 14-17, 1985).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Education; *Early Childhood Education; *Educational Practices; *Educational Trends; *Elementary Education; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society)
IDENTIFIERS *Kenya; *United States

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the education of young children in Kenya, this brief paper contains excerpts from a question and answer interview between two early childhood educators from the United States and Kenya. Both similarities and differences of the Kenyan and the U.S. system of education are revealed. Interview topics covered include the following: socially respected professions; educational theories and philosophy; beginning reading instruction; teacher/pupil ratios in classrooms; compulsory school attendance; trends in sex of teachers; incorporation of American educational practices into Kenyan schools and vice versa; and the future of education in Kenya. (DST)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED267894

A LOOK AT KENYA'S CHILDREN

BY

DR. GLENDA F. ROBERSON

AND

ISAAC MULATYA MUOKI

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Glenda F. Roberson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 015671

About the authors . . . . .

Dr. Glenda F. Roberson is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at The University of Texas at Tyler and recently studied the educational systems in Egypt and Kenya.

Isaac Mulatya Muoki is an educator in Nairobi, Kenya and is studying at City College in New York City.

Africa

A look into the education of young children in Kenya reveals both similarities and differences to the U.S. system of education. The following interview excerpts were exchanged between two early childhood educators: an American and a Kenyan.

Q: Many parents in the U.S. want their children to grow up to be attorneys or physicians. These are high paying professions that seemingly carry status in our society. What professions carry status in Kenya?

A: Politics. It is leadership. One is elected and that is a position with status.

Q: Would teaching be a respected profession?

A: That is a difficult question. It was in Colonial times. Now we have more teachers, some are good and some are bad. Some are "behaving" well. Teachers used to be the most educated, the most learned. This is no longer true. Professions linked with higher salaries are probably most respected.

Q: Has the philosophy concerning education changed over the last few years?

A: Yes. During the Colonial System, up until 1964, we had segregated schools: European, Asian, Arabic and African schools. When these became integrated after our independence was gained from Great Britian, one curriculum for all Kenyan schools was established. It is set by the government upon advice from educational ministers. There is now more emphasis on the individual becoming more self-sufficient. There is an emphasis on adding more subjects to the curriculum to encourage this self-reliance, such subjects as arts and crafts, poetry, and agriculture is now taught in all schools. Children are taught through discovery methods.

Q: How do you assist children in learning to read?

A: When a child enters primary school at the age of 7, he begins to learn the English language. Many speak Swahili prior to school. English acquisition, reading, spelling and writing are taught at the same time. An example would include: "Here is a glass." It is spoken in English, read, spelled, and written.

Q: This strong emphasis on a language experience approach then precedes the use of reading basals?

A: Yes. We later have Safari readers. Safari means travel.

Q: What theorist do you best relate to in seeking understanding for teaching children?

A: Piaget and Erickson

Q: Is there corporal punishment in your schools?

A: There once was, but not so much now. There is a shift toward counseling, helping a child to understand the problem.

Q: What is the teacher/pupil ratio in primary schools?

A: Perhaps a teacher has 40 students. More pupils are attending schools. There is overcrowding.

Q: Is school attendance compulsory?

A: It is not compulsory, but most pupils go because education is free and it is viewed as progress.

Q: It is free at all levels?

A: Nursery schools are not free if it is privately owned, as are most. More children are attending nursery schools since more mothers are having to work for economic reasons.

Q: Do more males or females serve as teachers of young children?

A: In the preschools, there are more female teachers. There is a balance of men and women teachers in the primary school. It is acceptable for men to teach children in our society. More females teach in the city, more males in the rural areas. Education for girls is not stressed as much in rural areas; thus, there are fewer who are qualified to teach in their villages.

Q: If you could incorporate one U.S. idea of education into Kenyan schools, what would it be?

A: There is a need for more learning materials in the nursery schools. This is very important. They must have materials to learn with. They must have better facilities. There is not enough money, parents are poor, schools are not up to standards. Many buildings are semi-permanent. Many children share books. There is not enough staff and classrooms are not adequate.

Q: What is one area, in your opinion, that should be changed in our U.S. schools?

A: I should not commit myself, I may need more time to learn the system. The level of discipline in the U.S. needs improvement. Something should be done.

Q: What do you believe the future of education will be for Kenya?

A: There will be an emphasis on practical education. This will be quite nice and productive. At the same time, I am worried about the rate in population growth. It is quite alarming. I've conducted research in this area. There will be problems. 65-75% of the population will be children; thus, a small percentage of adults will be supporting the majority of the population. The economic rate of growth is not in pace with the population growth. Many rural families are ignorant about family planning. The children come quickly and are not spaced. Many have 12-15 children. Many young girls are having babies before they marry. It is a pity that this is happening. There is a lack of sex education and this results in unwanted and permature pregnancies. This is a disgrace to our society.